

Community Profile



California Department of Health Services | Cancer Detection Programs: Every Woman Counts

tri-counties regional partnership

Area Served:

San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties

Medically Underserved Women Helped:

Over 8,000 women screened from July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2001. The include 66% Hispanic/Latina, 1% African-American, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander and 25% Caucasian.

Program Contact:

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Most Significant Challenge:

Cultural and access barriers that prevent Latinas from getting appropriate care and testing. Barriers include: difficulty getting time off work, clinics hard to get to, language barriers and lack of knowledge about need for screening.

How Challenge Is Met:

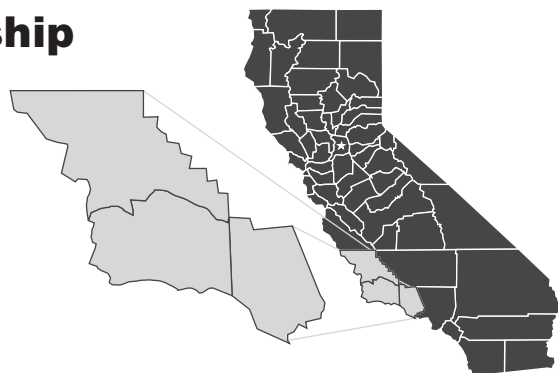
Cooperative efforts with physicians and community-based organizations to host single-site screening days. Also work with providers to establish tracking protocols to get women screened every year.

Program Spotlight:

Special Screening Days Offer One-Stop Breast Care

When a woman gets screened for breast cancer, typically she first sees a doctor or health care professional for a clinical breast exam, and then gets a referral for a mammogram at a different facility. Breast cancer professionals in the tri-county area wanted to capture the women they were losing between the initial breast exam and mammography appointment. So, they decided to follow the example of successful retailers – one-stop shopping!

Now, Special Screenings Days are one of the most successful breast cancer outreach efforts in the state. With more than 60 events scheduled in a one-year period, Special Screening Days offer



clinical breast exams and mammograms at a single site. A mobile mammography unit is present at most events and women can also schedule future Pap test appointments. The program has been especially successful among Latinas, for whom multiple appointments at different locations meant missing valuable workdays and many bus transfers. Many of the area women screened for breast cancer have been reached through the Special Screening Days program.

Started about six years ago in Santa Barbara County, the number of Special Screening Days have increased dramatically in the last couple years and expanded to San Luis Obispo and Ventura counties. The local partnership provides mini-grants to local community-based organizations to help promote the events, and peer-to-peer education programs encourage women to bring their friends and family. The partnership also offers logistical support and works closely with health care providers to develop follow-up protocols to encourage annual rescreening.

Getting rescreened every year is key to catching breast cancer early when the chance of survival is excellent. In addition to reaching thousands of local women for initial screenings, the Special Screening Days have been instrumental in helping local physicians increase their own rescreening efforts – with several doctors getting 50%-70% of their patients rescreened.